

ANIL KUMAR SAHU  
M. Sc. (ICT-ARD)  
DA-IICT  
GANDHINAGAR

**TOPIC: “Citizen Empowerment through Information using ICT in  
the current paradigm of the Right to Information Act”  
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**1. Introduction:**

In order to promote openness, transparency and accountability in administration, so there is need of an act called as RTI Act. Now days ICT tools are mandatory in dissemination of information regarding the right of human being. It is the way that poor and illiterate people can understand the right to information under the control of public authorities. The Government is taking more initiative towards the RTI. Government has been started National Government Plan (NeGP). So that each village should have Community Service Center, Village knowledge Center and other initiatives to access of transparency of information about RTI and avoid the activities of corruption.

**2. Concept of Citizen Empowerment:**

The main concept are aggregating (Centralizing) all information to a single website and by listening to citizens that is the web is the place where all thoughts can be centralized to facilitate the future of our society. The Citizen Empowerment is good for democracy, strengthen governance, to ensure sustainable development by linking the community center with ICT tools in order to reduce poverty and achieving good healthy society. Citizen Empowerment is required to improve the understanding and knowledge of citizens as rights and duties in fulfilling social accountability. Through this concept there will increase in both mobilization and awareness to the people. There should be effective implementation of community center's role, obligation and responsibility so that citizen can build up trust and can know how to use their rights and duties.

**3. The RTI paradigm :**

During British regime there was concept of ruler and ruled. At that time public was suppressed and they were not able to disclose any information. In this regime there was no any encouragement to mass participation in any form in the governance and administration was possible. So, suppression of information was very natural and this was the asymmetrical power of British. This system continued after independence but intensity became less. But now scenario is going to be changed and there is regular monitoring the information to the

public

Right to Information Act, 2005 came as a paradigm shift. This has been changed completely. Now public are able to ask about any information to the Administrative system and this system also invites public to see whatever the things to show. After the 73rd and 74th constitutional amendment pertaining to panchayati raj, it is Right to Information Act reverberation of which are being widely felt in Indian governance.

#### **4. Limitations with the current paradigm:**

Following limitations:

- a) The public are not fully aware about his/her right and duties.
- b) The powerful person threatened to poor if discloses any information related to person.
- c) Public has less interest to spend time to file RTI
- d) RTI has not reached at grass root level people and not using this RTI act.
- e) Public is hesitating to talk with higher authority or administration.
- f) Government staff can charges extra cost like this could include wages of the officers involved in processing the RTI application, search fees, compilation fee etc.
- g) There is lack of details on public authority.
- h) Filling RTI to the criminal person is not easy task.

#### **5. The Proposed Solution for “Citizen Empowerment using ICT in the current RTI paradigm” :**

Following proposed solutions:

- a) There should be good infrastructure i. e building, telephone connection, internet, printer, UPS system, electricity, road, computer (Computerization).
- b) There should be full involvement of local authority, technology and participation at local public level.
- c) Train the local authority on social, accountability, right and duties among others.
- d) Each village should be linked through internet by application of ICT tools and should have one community resource center in every village.
- e) Communication between public and local authority should be matched.

- f) Online filling the form of RTI / Online grievance redressed will not only reduce the time of filling the form of RTI but also we will get information in least time with maximum efficiency.
- g) With the application of ICT, downloadable forms of all government departments, the budgets of village, taluka and district panchayats as well as detailed asset-wise progress of district planning boards. We can also obtain the electoral roll and list the people who are below poverty line (BPL). There should also have land record information so that each one can not claim on the same land and information should be updated after selling the land.
- h) We can develop village-wise maps with information on 95 parameters as in Panchmahal district through the application of ICT tools with the collaboration of Geographic Information System (GIS) of RESECO (Remote Sensing and Communications Unit).
- i) There should not be a barrier in terms of language. RTI should be filed in any language through application of ICT tools.
- j) Education system i. e teaching and learning through the online system to aware about RTI.
- k) Citizen Empowerment through access to information through ICT tools and leads to more efficient government and ultimately development of nation.
- l) Empowering Citizen to make informed decision regarding any problem.
- m) Using ICT to empower indigenous community involvement in Sustainable Forest Management.
- n) Self Sustainability in order to reduce poverty.
- o) Lot of foundation, Trust, NGO like Lara foundation who has done very good job in the recording of blood group and it will be better in emergency condition of village people. It will become possible with the application of ICT tools. Milk collection center is also linked with computer for better information.
- p) This statute is expected to empower the citizens in not only generating greater awareness of their rights but also prove to be an invaluable tool for ensuring better public service delivery. Over time this statute will foster a shift to a citizen centric government.

## **6. Implementation Road map of the new model/ solution:**

Model should be based on concept then implement for the excellence of service delivery in government organization with focusing on citizen interface and expectations and implementation should be in phage manner. The model should keep in mind according to citizen's characters, effectiveness of public grievance, redress mechanism and status of service delivery for the citizen prospective With the application of ICT tools, government agencies can self-assess and improve quality of their service delivery and after passing of time evaluation can be happened and excellence can be public ly recognized. The model should be adopted in each and every states of country. Government is going to improving the basic governance and promoting egovernance on a massive scale to reach up to common man. National e-government Plan (NeGP) has been worked with the department of Information Technology in the citizen Empowerment though information by ICT tools. Various other programmes have been started at both state level and central level like Mission Mode project (MMP). Side by side Ministry of Personnel is working on the programme of e-office to promote the demand of knowledge management. Corruption is a major problem in India. For good governance, it is mandatory to demolish it and implement an anti-corruption strategy and now India is determined to come at Zero-tolerance against corruption. Corruption can demolish through government reforms and active democratic participation. There is need for sensibility and sensitization of IAS officers to not think as a job but have to think as a serve to the people. RTI should be made as a fundamental right and citizen empowerment through active participation. Model of communication should be improved for proper functioning of system. There is need of appropriate funds to development of new model. There is need of capacity building and human resources to implement the model.

## **7. Conclusion:**

For citizen empowerment with the application of ICT tools is necessary. E-governance should be well regulated. We will have to keep in mind that we have to give attention on grass root level. We have to aware the public about his/her right and duties though radio, news paper, advertisement, internet, personal contact. We have to develop such kind of model that will benefit for the public after implementation. The civil servant have to act as a professional, work under transparency and impeccable integrity that facilitate good governance. Policies and programme should be made as per requirement of public i. e interest at national level. Training to the human resources people is mandatory on regular basis. Now government should plan for monitoring and evaluation for better utilization of RTI. Government action should be seen at lower level of society and each one have own right and

own duties. There should be transparent in each and every aspect in government system and should think multidimensional approach for healthy governance and healthy society.

## 8. References

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